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Participants at the International Council on Archives Symposium.

keynote address. He spoke about information as a commodity; how physical format has determined the nature of the information-keeping professions; and the effect that the wide range of new electronic technologies has had on the information-keeping professions.

"The choices of recording medium made by information creators will have an impact on all our practices, policies and procedures; these choices will force a reassessment of the theories and principles upon which our institutions have been operated; they will reshape our organizational structures; and they will change the nature of the occupations of all types of information keepers," he said.

Documents: Objects or Processes?

Ronald Weissman, Assistant Vice-President for Academic Computing at Brown University in Rhode Island, told the symposium that the computer user's dream may become the informa-

tion manager's nightmare. He said hypermedia technology now permits computer users to integrate sound, graphics, video, and voice-annotated memoranda in ever-changing documents that are more processes than objects. He also explained how new technologies have led to the "virtual" document. (Unlike traditional documents, which are collections of data that have been assembled and organized, the "virtual" document is an idea about how data can be organized. Software permits users to specify series of links among data, and to cross frontiers between databases, thereby organizing a document that doesn't exist physically together. The "virtual" document may also be ephemeral, leaving no record of its existence.)

"In a large organization you can have individuals constructing their own links across all kinds of files, creating rich webs of information in a totally undisciplined, unmanaged, unregulated, unrule-based way," Dr. Weissman said.

Information professionals should define standards and procedures for data, networks, and analysis tools, and they should participate in the computer

International Council on Archives Meets in Ottawa

Information professionals must respond quickly to fundamental changes occurring in the way information is managed.

This was the message that speakers and participants brought to the International Symposium on Current Records, in Ottawa from 15 to 19 May. More than 300 archivists, librarians, records managers, computer specialists, and policy makers from 28 countries participated in the symposium, which was hosted by the National Archives of Canada in co-operation with the International Council on Archives.

Themes Highlighted

Basil Stuart-Stubbs, Director of the School of Library, Archival, and Information Studies at the University of British Columbia, highlighted the themes of the symposium in his

design process. Information professionals' contribution to the design process is important because few designers and vendors of computer hardware and software care about integrity, validity, verifiability, auditability, or data validation, he said.

Standards a Prerequisite

Sam Kula, Director of the Moving Image and Sound Archives, National Archives of Canada, also stressed the need for standards, noting the problems of incompatible technologies and obsolescence.

Other speakers emphasized the importance of developing and using international standards for technology and data.

Claes Gränström, Deputy Director General, Riksarkivet, Sweden told the symposium that standards of all kinds are a prerequisite for preserving information data that are of archival value. International, national, and regional standards are necessary when archival institutions lay down rules for the use and quality of storage media. Archival institutions need to influence the development of technology and related standards.

Some participants told the symposium that information professionals need to consider the values and practices of their disciplines. Although the principles and practices of library science, archival science, and information technology have traditionally been different, they are now converging, some speakers suggested. Participants debated the question until one librarian pointed out that information users have already decided: they do not understand or care about the boundaries between the disciplines.

Participants also noted the need for new policies.

Information Seen as a Free Good

Diana Sangway of Her Majesty's Treasury in the United Kingdom said that officials need to learn to manage information as a resource. During the recent implementation of a new information management policy in that

country, she had observed that officials regard information as a free good.

Franklin Reeder of the Office of Management and Budget in the United States emphasized the importance of distinguishing between value or policy perspectives and the claims of institutional stakeholders. Stakeholders, such as information managers, bureaucrats, and the information industry, all have a legitimate interest in government information policy. However, he cautioned, they are all inclined to view their particular approach as the sole representative of the public interest. Policy developers must look beyond these claims, and consider the values and goals of government as well.

They should be concerned about how to make government more efficient, how to make government more responsive, how to make information accessible to citizens who do not have access to money and technology.

They should respect confidentiality, and preserve the collective memory of the nation, Reeder said. These goals are often not in harmony with each other, he added.

A panel discussion summed up the symposium. Each of the four panellists took a different perspective from which to view the exchanges of the previous three days.

Celine Walker, Executive Secretary, Advisory Committee for the Coordination of Information Systems with the United Nations, chaired the panel and focused on historical perspectives. Angeline Kamba, Director, National Archives of Zimbabwe, discussed policy, training, and other management issues. Philip McLellan, Director, Informatics, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, said information management specialists should expect progress to come in bite-sized chunks and not in quantum leaps. They should set short-term achievable goals for themselves. Reeder discussed possible applications for the ideas presented. ■

Flora MacDonald Lauds National Archives of Canada Act

Following the International Symposium on Current Records, 19 senior information professionals from 14 countries remained in Ottawa to attend a four-day course titled "Current Records, Future Use." They were joined by 10 Canadian officials from the National Archives, the Department of Finance and Treasury Board, Transport Canada, and External Affairs Canada. The Honourable Flora MacDonald, Minister of Communications when the *National Archives of Canada Act* was proclaimed in 1987, addressed the opening session on 23 May.

"Right from the outset the *National Archives of Canada Act* was a noncontroversial issue between parties in the House of Commons," she said.

Potentially controversial questions about which documents the public should have access to had been resolved several years before during the long debate that preceded passage of the *Access to Information Act*.

Parliament Reaches Heights

The debate on second reading of the *National Archives of Canada Act* was an occasion when Parliament "reached its intended heights," she said.

The *Act* itself provides the National Archives with the means to prevent unauthorized destruction of government records and to ensure that records, which in the opinion of the National Archivist are of historic or archival importance, are transferred to the Archives.

The National Archivist, Jean-Pierre Wallot, thanked Ms. MacDonald for her remarks.

Dr. Wallot told the audience that the new *Act* specifies "encouraging archival activities and the archival community" as part of the mission of the National Archives of Canada. The National Archives was pleased to sponsor

this post-symposium course in cooperation with the International Development Research Centre ■

■ Archival Records — Current Use

"You have to decide whether you want to be merely custodians of the records or the guide to their deployment in current operations. The first is a path to a dingy and dusty past. The other is the road to an exciting and rewarding service role to the institution that employs you," Don Page told participants at the four-day post-symposium course.

Page was participating in a panel discussion about how officials use current and archival information to develop policy and programs. The panel was part of the "Current Records, Future Use" course held in Ottawa from 23 to 26 May. Panellists were: Don Page, External Affairs; Dan MacKay, Energy, Mines and Resources; and John Leslie, Indian and Northern Affairs.

Archives' Usefulness Needs Explaining

Page told the international audience of archivists and information managers, "Most archives that I have dealt with who were understaffed had failed to provide a reasonable explanation of their usefulness to senior management."

Page used the word "archives" to include semi-active, dormant, and historical records. ■

Information professionals need to know how policymakers can use history and they need to explain these uses to policymakers. They include providing an accurate institutional memory, furnishing quotes and references for speeches, giving background for analyzing current policy proposals, and providing precedents for litigation.

Managers who change positions frequently as they climb the corporate ladder, especially, need access to an institutional memory, he said.

"The institutional memory is locked up in records that they are probably not aware of. It becomes your responsibility to make them aware of what is, in fact, in those records."

Although managers in policy areas may change posts frequently, staff in areas in charge of archives should not, Page said.

"If you change staff repeatedly, you won't have people who know the records, not just where to find something, but the significance of the policy...how to interpret what the policy person is reading."

Policymakers use records when they are analyzing current policy proposals, Page said. They need to know whether something similar has been tried in the past, why it succeeded or failed, and what a policy would require to be successful. Policy developers need quick access to this information if it is to be useful, he added.

"I need to be able to get on the phone to an archivist and say 'In two hours this is what I require' and if the archives can't perform, then they are useless as far as our operation is concerned," he said.

Archives Aid in Boundary Dispute

Dan MacKay told participants how he used archival records to prepare the cartographic evidence for the Canadian case in the Gulf of Maine international boundary dispute in 1980.

Although the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources had a large collection of old maps, MacKay was unable to use them because no one could guide him through the collection, which had been reboxed several times over the years.

"This left me in a difficult position...Therefore, I had to use the facilities of the (National Archives') National Map Collection...We had to cull the entire collection in a very short period of time."

Energy, Mines and Resources turned its collection of old maps over to the National Archives in 1989.

Archives Are Living Testimony

John Leslie explained why the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs requires archival records to do its day-to-day work.

For example, the Department needs the records of the "civilization" program from the early 1800s. This well-meaning program, aimed at turning Indian warriors into self-sufficient farmers, met with varying degrees of success, Leslie said.

Now, the modern Department of Indian and Northern Affairs is learning from the past.

"I sincerely believe that every effort is now being made to try and learn from our past errors. And that is why archival records are so important to the current operations of the Department. They are not dead records, but they are living testimony to what was attempted in the past, why it failed — and perhaps even why we have succeeded." ■

■ Good Management Depends on Good Record-Keeping

"My experience is that no one can efficiently manage anything who doesn't know its history," the Honourable Jack Pickersgill told an international audience of archivists and records managers in Ottawa on 23 May. The information professionals were attending a four-day post-symposium course titled "Current Records, Future Use."

During his 35-year career in the public service and as a minister of the Crown, Mr. Pickersgill managed organizations ranging from the Prime Minister's Office to the Canadian Transport Commission. He was minister responsible for the National Archives when the first

federal records centre was established in 1956.

Mr. Pickersgill described how he dealt with the large volume of documents that faced him when he became Minister of Citizenship and Immigration in 1954.

The only way to prevent the paper from burying the administration was to put it in the charge of a senior officer who had no other tasks, Mr. Pickersgill said. Since the official had no other responsibilities, managing the records had to be a priority. Only a senior official would do.

"You should not have junior people in charge of the management of records because they won't be able to exert enough pressure," he explained.

Pressure Is Necessary

Pressure is necessary to combat the passive resistance of officials. Some

officials fear their records will be lost. Others fear they will not have ready access to their documents. Still others are afraid their records will be mismanaged by incompetent people.

"It took a lot of experience and wisdom for the people in the Treasury Board to recognize that managing records was a top job, not a second-rate job, and that first-rate people should be in charge of it," Mr. Pickersgill said.

He explained how records, once collected and culled, can serve the department and the nation.

Records establish responsibility. They help managers avoid making contradictory and confused decisions, and lead the way to remedying such decisions when they do occur.

Well managed records preserve decisions that have nation-wide importance. Where decisions are made that shape the course of events beyond the

department and beyond the government, the records of these decisions should be kept, Mr. Pickersgill said. ■

In the next issue...

Treasury Board Secretariat has published its new Management of Government Information Holdings Policy. Dated 1 August 1989, it is an umbrella policy that requires government institutions to manage all information throughout its life cycle, regardless of its form or the media on which it exists. The policy tells institutions what they must do to manage their information holdings in a coordinated and cost-effective manner and provides guidelines to assist them in meeting these requirements. The next issue of the *Government Records Bulletin* will examine the relationship between this policy and the *National Archives of Canada Act*.

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Dans le prochain numéro ...

■ « Nous déploions tous les efforts possibles pour tirer une légion de nos erreurs. Voilà pourquoi les documents administratifs sont tellement importants pour nous. Voilà pourquoi nous devons réussir dans certains cas. » ■

À titre d'exemple, il a soulevé que son ministère doit examiner les documents d'archives du programme de « civilisation » qui a été débattu au début des années 1800. Selon lui, ce programme, établi dans les meilleures intentions, a été dévasté par les mêmes autorités qui ont démantelé l'ordre des congrégations religieuses.

ministre ne exigea pour que soit opérations courantes sans consulter des documents d'archives.

LES ARCHIVES SONT NOTRE MÉMOIRE COLLECTIVE

de cartes anciennes aux Archives na-

Le ministère de l'Énergie, des Mines et des Ressources a donné son fonds

« Comme je devais examiner très rapidement toute la collection, j'ai dû consulter les experts de la Division des archives cartographiques et archéologiques canadiennes et des Archives nationales.

Bien que le ministre de l'Energie, des Mines et des Ressources disposait d'un important fonds de cartes anciennes, M. Mackay n'a pu le consulter pour établir ce fonds, qui avait été déboulé et remballé plusieurs fois.

Dan Mackay a expliqué aux participants comment il a utilisé des documents d'archives pour réunir des éléments de preuve à l'appui du Canada dans le litige de 1980 concernant la frontière internationale du golfe du Maine.

L'utilité des archives lors d'un litige international

« Je dois pouvoir appeler un archiviste et lui dire : voici ce dont j'ai besoin dans deux heures. S'il ne peut donner suite à ma demande, les archives perdent leur utilité à mes yeux. »

«Dans la mesure où les adresses consultent les dossiers qu'ils analysent les projets de politique, il leur faut savoir d'énorme de politique, il leur faut savoir paradoxalement si l'on a déjà appliquée une politique analogue, pourront cette fois être ce que succès ou un échec pourriez être une ligne efficace.»

trouver un renseignement, ne connaît pas l'importance d'une politique donnée et ne soutient pas en mesure d'interpréter ce que les responsables des politiques politiques issent. »

« Si les employés changent constam-
ment, ils ne connaissent pas les dos-
siers, c'est-à-dire qu'ils ne savent pas

Bein que dans les secteurs responsables des politiques, les gestionnaires peuvent changer de poste souvent, le personnel responsable des archives ne devrait pas avoir cette possibilité.

« La mémoire institutionnelle est souvent constituée de documents qui ne sont pas nécessairement les documents de ces souvenirs. Il vous incombe de leur faire connaître le contenu de ces documents. »

lourous session. Page, les gestions-
naires, plus particulièrement ceux qui
changent de poste régulièrement, doivent avoir accès à la mémoire de
leur institution.

Les professionnels de l'information doivent savourer comment les archives servent les agents responsables des politiques et le leur expliquer. Celles-ci peuvent étre utilisées pour fournir une bande d'informations institutionnelles précises et exactes; pour former des citoyens et des référances dans les discours; pour définir le contexte dans lequel il convient d'analyser les projets d'envergure; et pour trouver des exemples pouvant servir de

affaire et qui établirait à court de person-
nel disponible néglige de prouver leur
utilité à la haute direction. »
Par le terme « archives », le
représentant des Affaires extérieures
designait les documents officiels

Les documents d'archives utilisent couramment

une même gestion des documents assurer une prise de décision plus éclairée et permettre de conserver les décisions importantes du gouvernement qui influencent les grandes orientations du pays. Aussi, toute décision ayant un impact national devrait être consensuelle.

M. Pickering a expliqué comment un classement servir à la fois le ministère et la nation.

difficacé suppose une excellente organisation de l'information, qui une gestion rationnelle des documents, car on ne peut assurer une gestion éclairée sans une gestion des documents, car on ne possède pas de fonds documentaires suffisants pour assurer une gestion éclairée d'un dossier. On ignore le volume d'un dossier, ou son histoire. Les gestionnaires de quatorze jours, suivent le collège intermédiaire, et il n'utilise « Current records, Future Use ».

Utilité des archives Nécessité d'expliquer

« Vous devrez décliner, à fait observer une page, si vous souhaitez être de simples gardiens des documents ou des conséillers en matière de consultation ouverte. La première avenue est un véritable défi à relever en matière de travail social, la seconde mène à un travail stimulant et enrichissant au service de l'institution qui vous emploie. »

Le contexte d'exercice certaines pressions

La seule raison de contrôler les documents d'un ministère est de faire un usage responsable d'un haut niveau de responsabilité d'une gestion qui deviennent une priorité. »

Un simple fonctionnaire ne devrait pas être chargé de la gestion des documents car il n'a pas les pouvoirs corrects nécessaires. »

Le problème de la surproducción de documents lorsqu'il étaut ministre de la diplomatie et de l'immigration : 954, il a affirmé :

Une gestion efficace suppose une excellente organisation des documents

Le honnorable Jack Picardsgill a souligné, lors de la séance du 23 mai dernier, devant une audience intermédiaire, l'importance d'archivistes et de gestionnaires d'archives dans la mise en valeur de l'histoire canadienne.

■ Après avoir remercié l'ancienne ministre, l'archiviste national M. Jean-Pierre Wallot, l'archiviste remâdiger du aux termes de la nouvelle loi, appuyer le millénaire archivistique fait partie intégrante de la mission des Archives nationales du Canada, et qu'à cette époque, il étais en mesure de faire une analyse critique de l'ensemble des documents gouvernementaux et de leur rôle dans l'histoire du Canada. Il a également souligné l'importance de l'archivistique dans la préservation et la transmission des connaissances et de l'expérience de l'ensemble de la population canadienne.

Los des départs en deuxième section
du projet de loi, le Parlement est
réellement revenu « une tribune de
discussion nationale », de dire Me
MacDonald.

Le Parlement à son meilleur
succès, commises contre-
nait le droit d'accès du public aux
documents disponibles sur
pulissons ainsi résolus il y a
précédant l'adoption de la Loi sur
l'accès à l'information.

« Des débuts, a fait observer Me McDonald, les Communes se sont rendu compte que la Loi sur les Arrêches nationales du Canada ne don- neait pas lieu à des débats ouverts.

devant les participants à la séance d'ouverture le 23 mai.

Suite au colloque international sur les archives courantes, dix-neuf protocoles sont conclus de l'information de caractère documentaire à Ottawa pour suivre un cours de quatre jours intitulé « Utilisation des systèmes de l'information de quatorze pays soit résidés à Ottawa ou résidant à l'étranger. Ces systèmes sont utilisés pour promouvoir la communication lors de la promulgation de la loi en 1987, à Paris. Mme Flora MacDonald, ministre des extérieures se joint à eux. Mme Transports et du ministre des Affaires étrangères et du ministre des Communications, du ministre des Finances, du ministre des Archives nationales, du ministre des Affaires étrangères et du ministre des Relations extérieures se joint à eux. Mme

Flora MacDonald change la Loi sur les Archives nationales du Canada

Le colloque s'est terminé par une discussion en atelier, où chacun des quatre experts a résumé sous un angle différent les échanges des trois jours précédents.

Information perçue comme bien gratuit

des participants ont aussi souligné que de nouvelles lignes directrices sont nécessaires.

Section Classes Grands-trom, directeur général adjoint du Riksarkivet (Svedé), la conservatoire des données ayant une valeur archivistique nécessaire, au préalable, l'élaboration de toute une norme inter nationales. L'existence de norme commune dé normes. Les normes régionales sont essentielles lorsqu'il existe des dépôts d'archives fixent des règles concernant l'utilisation et la qualité des supports d'information. Il faut que les dépôts d'archives influencent le développement de la technologie et des normes connexes.

Sam Kula, directeur de la Division des archives audio-visuelles des Archives nationales du Canada, a insisté lui aussi sur la nécessité d'élaborer des normes, car beaucoup de techniques, car bien entendu rapidement désuètes et bon nombre sont souvent incompatibles.

Des normes : un prérequis

Les professionnels de l'information décrivent les procédures concernant les normes et des règles pour élaborer des documents d'analyse. De même, il est important que ceux-ci soient intégrés au processus de conception. L'information peut être peu de conception et de formalisation parce que peu de malencontre ou de logiciels se soucient de l'intégrité, de la validité, de la vérifiabilité ou de la validation des données.

organisait un document qui n'existe pas physiquement. Le document « Virtuel » peut aussi être éphémère, ne laissant aucune trace de son existence.

Au sein d'un grand organisme, il peut y avoir des personnes qui créent leurs propres liens entre toutes sortes de fichiers, produisant ainsi d'importantes banques d'informations d'un tagon disciplinaire et désordonnée, et

Documents : objets ou processus ?



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Archives Nationales du Canada

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